

VZCZCXRO5796
PP RUEHBI RUEHCI
DE RUEHCG #1818 2331152
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 211152Z AUG 06
FM AMCONSUL CHENNAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9407
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0186
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1251
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0525
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1040
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0114
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1895
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0052
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0106
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 4835
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0578
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0185

UNCLAS CHENNAI 001818

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: FURTHER INCREASE IN SRI LANKAN REFUGEE ARRIVALS

REF: A) Chennai 1816 B) Chennai 1746 (NOTAL)

11. (SBU) With the tense situation prevailing in northern Sri Lanka, there has been a further rise in the number of refugees arriving Tamil Nadu. According to Chennai-based UNHCR Associate Repatriation Officer Vadeja Bharati, 528 persons landed at Mandapam on August 20, the highest number to land in Tamil Nadu on a single day since the recent wave of arrivals began in January 2006. Bharati said the 24-hour curfew, the break of communication links and a steep rise in prices of essential commodities in some parts of northern Sri Lanka have pushed growing numbers of Sri Lankan Tamils to cross the strait to India. "Some refugees told us they had to abandon their valuables such as cattle since there were no buyers," Bharati said. According to the UNHCR official, authorities on the Indian side are being hospitable but the Sri Lankan Navy has resorted to arresting refugees to stop the flow. He said the sea will become rougher by mid-September, making the boat journey almost impossible. As of August 21, the total number of refugees arrived since January is 8,253, representing 2,518 families.

12. (SBU) Meanwhile, local south Indian media reported that the Government of Tamil Nadu has directed all District Collectors to accommodate refugees in the camps functioning in their districts. According to the reports, 3,600 of the newly arrived refugees have been transferred from Mandapam to the other camps in Tamil Nadu on the basis of their requests.

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